

Filed for intro on 03/01/95
House Bill _____
By _____

Senate No. SJR0085
By Springer

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of James L. Bailey.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that this legislative body pause in its deliberations to remember one of the outstanding men in the history of our state, James L. Bailey, a conservationist, educator, and great friend of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Jim Bailey was the patriarch of conservation in our great state for more than one half of a century, serving the Department of Conservation with unparalleled excellence and unprecedented devotion; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bailey began his meritorious career with the United States Department of Commerce and the Department of Agriculture, where he will long be remembered for establishing the Emergency Recovery Program for farmers during the Great Depression; and

WHEREAS, in 1937, Mr. Bailey was recruited to join Tennessee's new Department of Conservation; a young state agency with only three employees then located in the basement of the War Memorial Building; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bailey's teaching certificate and expertise in environmental preservation were put to use at the department when in 1938 he became Education Assistant to the Commissioner; and as the department grew in the 1950's, he was named Director of the Educational Services Division; and

WHEREAS, this man became known as “Mr. Conservation” across Tennessee as he worked steadfastly to take the gospel of wise land use to tens of thousands of school children and their teachers, to garden clubs, environmental groups, and even government officials; and

WHEREAS, “Mr. Conservation” made it his mission to educate Tennesseans about the proper use of land, care of forests, restoration of wildlife to the fields and forests, improvement of streams and their inhabitants, and development of parks and recreational facilities; and

WHEREAS, it has been said that “he could draw sermons from stones and bald earth, edible goodies from weed patches or forecast the ruin of a nation from the depth of its gullies”; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bailey did just that at Warren County’s Campaign School some years ago where he used the barren and eroded schoolyard as his background for an eloquent and effective presentation on land misuse; eight years later he was pleased to see that the land had been completely restored by students through a planned program inspired by his speech; and

WHEREAS, highly trained and widely read, Mr. Bailey had a scientist’s understanding of the natural law, yet he drew from a perspective that was deeply spiritual by saying, “One appreciates his place more when he lives among other things he knows and cares for”; and

WHEREAS, concentrating on conserving and developing the soil and water, mineral resources, and scenic and recreational resources of the state, Mr. Bailey produced more than twenty films for the state and wrote numerous speeches for governors and commissioners, in addition to multiple proclamations for things like National Wildlife Week and the 25th anniversary of the founding of Tennessee’s State Parks; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bailey wrote and collaborated with others in writing teaching guides and teacher and pupil aids, along with co-authoring Our Land and Our Living, a textbook widely adopted by Tennessee schools; and

WHEREAS, for many years, Mr. Bailey received praise for the annual teacher training workshop he established, known as one of the best in-service conservation education programs in the country; and

WHEREAS, his involvement with workshops did not end with teachers as he developed mini-workshops for garden club members and organized school forestry and 4-H camps for young people; and

WHEREAS, his concern for the betterment of Tennessee communities led him to establish the first conservation district in 1940, and he was instrumental in the growth of conservation districts statewide for more than three decades; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bailey was also essential to the passage of the 1947 No-Fence Law banning free-ranging cattle and was a staunch advocate of President Johnson's National Trails System Act; and

WHEREAS, further demonstrating his dedication to conservation education, Mr. Bailey wrote for The Tennessee Conservationist and, from 1937 until 1959, he was Schools Editor, advancing to Associate Editor in 1959, Editor-in-Chief in 1972, and then to Editor Emeritus; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bailey helped to organize and served as an officer and board member of many influential state and national organizations, including Tennessee Beautiful, Inc., Tennessee Environmental Council, American Association for Conservation Information, Conservation Education Association, the Torch Club of Nashville and the Soil Conservation Society of America; and

WHEREAS, for his many achievements, Mr. Bailey received countless honors of which even a brief list is inspiring: Governor's Conservationist of the Year, Conservation Educator of the Year, the Future Farmers of America Award, Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs' Silver Sharing Cup, National Council of State Garden Club's Silver Seal Award, National Conservation Education Association's Cartter Patten Award, and the distinction of Fellow from the Soil Conservation Society of America; and

WHEREAS, a friend and colleague in the Department of Conservation once said that Jim Bailey's "success formula was a unique combination of humility, humor, a vast storehouse of information and a wise perception of who could help heal what"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bailey's dedication, generosity, wisdom and spirit will likely live for years to come as his collections of films, publications, personal papers, and rare books form the basis for the Department of Conservation's Resource Center and the Bailey Collection at the Portland Library; and

WHEREAS, his wife, Hester Brown Bailey, served as an inspiration to him for many years and he enjoyed sharing his accomplishments with her and his daughter Annie; stepsons Jimmy and Danny Brown; and stepdaughter Adelaide Butler; and

WHEREAS, just as Mr. Bailey once said "nowhere on Earth does the sun shine more beneficently than on Tennessee", we can say that nowhere in the history of our great state can we find a more diligent conservation educator and devout public servant than was Mr. Bailey; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby pause to honor the memory of James L. Bailey and celebrate the life of this man whose many successes and selfless contributions to Tennessee will live eternally.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.